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AN INTRODUCTION

John Kent^{TO}

A COURSE OF LECTURES

ON THE

EARLY FATHERS,

NOW IN DELIVERY IN

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

BY THE

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I AM induced to publish the following Lecture, nearly as it was delivered as the Introduction to a Course of Lectures on the Early Fathers; under the impression, that it will stand in the stead of a Syllabus, (which it would be inconvenient to me to prepare,) and serve to inform those whom it may concern to know it, of the subject and plan of the Lectures, and the spirit likely to govern them;—that it may perhaps protect me from misrepresentation or misconstruction out of the lecture-room;—and that, so far as its circulation extends, it may have the effect of calling the attention of Churchmen to a principle which ruled the Reformers in their revision of our Church, and succeeding Divines in their defence of her.

L E C T U R E,

&c.

GENTLEMEN,

I MUST bespeak your indulgence whilst I say a few words on the circumstances under which I am about to deliver before you a course of Lectures; and on the nature and subject of them.

Until the Margaret Professorship of Divinity became actually vacant by the death of the distinguished Prelate who last held it, and I was called up to Cambridge as a candidate for the chair, and looked into the conditions of the endowment, I was not adequately aware of the character or extent of the duties it imposes. On perusing however the deed by which the Margaret Professor is bound, I could not but see that a state of things was contemplated by the Foundress very different from that which now obtains:—residence in the University, almost throughout the year; studies nearly unintermitted; the professors, the directors of those studies; hours, at their

disposal; attendance at lectures, perhaps compulsory; the age of the pupils, tender; their attainments, moderate; books, scarce and costly—accordingly the Professor was to read some work on theology, approved by the authorities of the time, week after week, and term after term; and if to comment on it at all, his comment we must suppose to be such as would be consistent with perhaps a fortnight's preparation, (such being the whole interval which would sometimes elapse between his election and his commencement of lectures,) for a duty of almost daily recurrence and little cessation.

It is clear, therefore, that at a period when the University is for a considerable part of the year deserted; its pursuits, for the season, suspended; when again College-lectures are more than co-ordinate with public lectures; when the students are men of mature age, free from constraint, and of great acquirements; when books are cheap and abundant, and as accessible to the hearers as to the lecturer;—it is clear, I say, that when the times are thus changed, there must be made some corresponding change in the system of the lectures; and that for a Professor to adhere strictly to the letter of the foundation-deed, would be to render his office

utterly nugatory. In this case, as in other cases, circumstances must modify the interpretation of injunctions that are become out of date; and the spirit of them be chiefly looked to. For though it may be a very good maxim for *England*, that whenever a man finds himself with nothing to do, he should plant a tree; the precept would virtually be best followed in *Canada* by its direct infraction, and if there, in a similar event, he should cut one down.

Certainly the Lectures must now be original; for it is in vain to read books, (whatever it might have been of old to read manuscripts,) which the press affords freely to all: they must be well considered; for the audience now, are men for meat, not babes for milk: they must be so timed, as to fall in with the habits of the University, the residence of the members, and the convenience of many fellow-workers: they must be so frequent, as to minister to the utmost appetite of the hearers, which the skill, zeal and learning of the Professor can have the good fortune to create: and yet, (must I not add, without any desire to spare the labour of the party interested?) they must be so limited, as not to defeat their own end, and the intentions of the Foundress, either by drawing

extravagantly on the time and patience of merely voluntary auditors; or by reducing the lecturer himself to betray signs of weakness and exhaustion.

With these impressions of the duties and difficulties of the trust, I should in any case have approached the delivery of a course of lectures here, with much misgiving; and have claimed some allowance for novelty of position; and, it might be, trial of nerve: but in my own actual case, a feeble state of health of late, has rendered such allowance the more needful, because it has a good deal interfered with the provision I might otherwise have made, to meet the demands on me with a better grace. This personal allusion you will excuse; and I feel confident that I have said enough to ensure all fair forbearance on your part; till, if it shall please God, longer time and greater strength shall enable me to offer to your notice lectures more numerous (if it be thought well,) and less imperfect, than those which I shall produce now—and that in the mean while, you will conclude from my appearance amongst you as lecturer already, that any disposition to flinch from the resolute and effective discharge of an office, which I have deliberately undertaken, is the last wish of my heart.

When however, I said lectures less imperfect, I would not be understood to mean that those which I am about to deliver, have been written in heat or haste—very far from it—they are in truth the results of many years systematic reading—and though, had ample leisure been afforded, I should have given them perhaps a different shape before I ventured to produce them, yet I am not sure whether what might thus have been gained in the comprehensiveness and unity of the whole, would not have been more than balanced by what would have been lost in the absence of that which was individual and characteristic in the details; and whether therefore my time will not be better spent in making my present plan (the effect of accident and design,) complete, than in devising any other instead of it.

To explain to you, however, my purpose more specifically. It is this; to set before you the *substance* of the Fathers of the three first centuries after Christ; the substance, as I shall have gathered it for myself by my own actual perusal of them—a fact which I do not refer to as a boast; but as a pledge for the trustworthiness of what I offer; and for the greater spirit and freshness of my matter, than if it had been communicated to you at second or

third hand. I shall take the Fathers successively in their order; submitting to you the pith and body of each; some portions of them abridged; but much of them, especially such passages as seem to have a peculiar value and force, literally, and, as I believe, faithfully translated—I shall introduce from time to time such observations as suggested themselves whilst I read, or have occurred to me since, or may strike me hereafter, which bear on the canon of Scripture; the text of Scripture; the interpretation of Scripture; points of controversy; the doctrines and discipline of Churches; the evidences for the truth of Christianity in general; infidel objections; and the like;—indeed the plan I had sketched in my own mind, and to which I have already alluded, had there been time to execute it, was, to have drawn out the substance of the Fathers of the three first centuries into these and similar general heads, and to have submitted them to you in that reduced form; instead of taking you along with me, as I must now do if I can, through each of them in succession. At the same time, it is not to be denied, that the latter plan, which necessity rather than choice causes me to adopt, will have the advantage of conveying to you the more complete idea of these

writers themselves ; and probably I shall so far graft the other upon it, as to conclude my investigation of each Father in detail, with *a summary review* of his writings, as they tell upon the several questions I have enumerated, or others akin to them. In either case my object would be, to give my hearers a notion of the state of religion, so far as we can discover it in the comparatively few authors which remain of that age, as it subsisted for the first three hundred years after Christ—a period of great interest at every season ; and at this moment of the greatest ; when to possess some knowledge of the Primitive Church is becoming more and more imperative ; and learning, strictly ecclesiastical, which has so long been slumbering, is of necessity asserting itself once again. How curious are the ways of Providence in bringing what we may suppose its ends to pass ! How far God fetches his purposes about ! “The contrivances of heaven,” says South¹, “are as much above our politics, as beyond our arithmetic.” There was need perhaps of some revival of the Church of England ; of some greater and more general knowledge throughout the kingdom of the principles on which it was constructed, and of its inestimable worth ; a knowledge which when

¹ Vol. I. p. 227. Oxf. Ed.

once dispersed, would prepare the way for its adequate extension, and more hearty support. The admission of the Roman Catholics to greater political power; a measure, on which this is not the time or place to offer an opinion, and indeed the issues of which we cannot even yet foresee, has at least had this effect; it has given occasion to questions of controversy precisely such as demand an intimate acquaintance with antiquity to settle; it has sent divines once more to their books; to the writings of the Fathers, which had almost been suffered to perish out of remembrance; copies of their works, now so costly, having fallen to little more than a waste paper price; it has brought us back into something of the same position our reformers occupied when they regulated our Church; and as

“ When we have lost one shaft
We shoot his fellow of the self-same flight
The self-same way, with more advised watch,
To find the other forth,”

so are we now guided by passing events toward the resources they drew from; are led better to appreciate the use they made of them; and to understand once again, as a nation, the definite ground on which the Church of England rests; ground, from which her defenders must not, like the men of Ai, be

tempted to descend, if they would contend against her many adversaries successfully.

But before I proceed further in the development of my present plan, I must observe, that I have no notion of good divines being made by attendance on a course of lectures, whatever those lectures may be. There is no short road to sound knowledge of any kind; and the theologian can only be formed in the silence of his own study, and by the persevering application, under God's blessing, of his own powers—

Haud facilem esse viam voluit,

is still true of the approach to every thing that is valuable; and no Jewel or Sanderson or Bull will again arise, till men whose profession is divinity, shall give themselves up bodily to the mastering of it, and be content to be ignorant of much besides; “know to know no more”—I urge this with great earnestness on the students of the University, not with a view to interfere with their pursuits here, but to direct them *hereafter*; because nothing is more common than to observe the many precious years which are thrown away in the outset of their career by those who take orders; when fresh from school and college, with the powers of their minds at the best, their habits

of study not yet impaired, and their knowledge of the learned languages still untarnished by disuse and the lapse of time, they have all the means that can be desired for advantageously following a course of reading (why not that of the Fathers of the Ante-Nicene Church?) at their command; and surely should follow it; instead of wasting their strength, as they now so often do, on this volume of sermons or that, which happens to be the newest of the day; on this comment upon scripture or that, the offspring perhaps of little thought and less knowledge; on this controversial pamphlet or that, written by authors who may or may not be qualified by temper and attainments for such investigations; whilst in wandering through this limbo of theology they usually spend the first eight or ten years of their clerical lives, (if not the whole of them;) till possibly awakened at length by some accident to the necessity of having some broad principles of their own to go upon, and some grounds on which to found them, they are led to approach those primitive authorities, which they should have repaired to long before; but with the disadvantage of their Greek and Latin damaged by the interval, and their powers of steady application greatly decayed. Lectures are no substitute for the personal exertion to which

I thus point; but this they *may* effect; they may sharpen the appetite for such a labour; they may furnish the hearers with such an acquaintance with an author as may stimulate their curiosity for one more intimate; they may give them some notion of the treasures accessible to them, which they have hitherto disregarded; they may satisfy them that a mine of argument on this interesting and debateable topic and on that, lies in such and such a quarter unexplored by them; and when they leave the University with the impulse of such lectures upon them, they may retire to their curacies or their livings, with the resolution of losing no time to begin to put their intentions in force; and our Church will have to boast of a clergy, who can defend her with discretion, having been long accustomed to go round about her, to tell her towers and mark well her bulwarks.

I consider it then conducive to these ends so much to be desired, that our young divines should be directed to turn their attention, next after the Scriptures, to the Primitive Fathers; not with blind allegiance, as authorities to which they must in all things bow, but with such respect as is due to the only witnesses we have, of the state and opinions of the Church immediately after the Apostles' times; and such as the Church

of England herself encourages. Who indeed could dispute this, who considered of what venerable antiquity is the substance of her ritual; who compared it in numerous places with short and incidental fragments of a primitive one, to the same effect, and often identical with it in expression, to be gathered by a careful reader out of these earliest writers¹; who

¹ There is an interesting paper in the "Tracts for the Times," (Vol. I. No. 34,) on the hints which the New Testament affords if carefully examined, of the existence of "a minute ritual," even contemporaneous with the Apostles. In 1 Cor. xi. 2—16, where the wearing of hair, long or short, covered or uncovered, is touched on, reference is made to the "*custom*" of the church. Again, the woman was to have her head covered "because of the angels," whatever this reason might be it was of a practical nature, intelligible to the congregation at Corinth. Again, *houses* of prayer are hinted at, as perhaps distinct from mere dwelling-houses, in v. 22, "have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the *church* of God?" Possibly Acts ii. 46, viii. 3, and xvi. 13, may have a similar meaning. Mosheim, De Rel. Christian. ante Constant. p. 117; and Bishop Pearson (On the Creed, Art. ix.) would seem to say 1 Cor. xi. 18, and Acts xi. 26. In 1 Cor. xiv. 16, there is a passing allusion to the use of the word *Amen*, after the Eucharistical prayer. In 1 Cor. x. 16, to a *consecration* of the cup, "the cup of blessing which we bless." In Acts xiii. 2, the term *λειτουργούντων*, *ministering*, seems to point to the *λειτουργία* of the primitive Church. Some other passages are also produced in the same Tract. To these might have been added the use of the word "*unlearned*," (1 Cor. xvi. 16, *τοῦ ἰδιώτου*), the party who was to say *Amen*; i.e. the people or *laymen*, as distinguished from the *ecclesiastic* who offered the prayer. "St Paul himself," as Hooker says, (B. v. c. 77, § 2,) in reference to this text, "dividing the body of the Church of Christ into two moieties, nameth the one part *ἰδιώτας*, which is as much as to say the order of

looked to the ancient liturgies in which such fragments are embodied; and which have so

the laity; the opposite part whereunto we in like sort term the order of God's clergy." And again, another example of the same kind is furnished in Acts ii. 42, if, as Mosheim thinks, it contains a summary of the primitive service—*ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες* (1) *τῇ διδασκῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων*, (2) *καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ*, (3) *καὶ τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου*, (4) *καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς*. Aut me omnia fallunt, aut S. Lucas, distinctè omnes partes divini cultus in cætu Hierosolymitano enumeravit his verbis. Mosheim's comment then follows, (*De Rel. Christian. ante Constant. p. 113.*) which should be consulted.

If from the writings of the New Testament we advance to those of the earliest Fathers, we shall have still more glimpses at such "a minute primitive ritual," though as the Church at that period used much reserve in speaking of its sacraments and ordinances amongst catechumens and infidels, only imparting the nature and method of them to converts about to be baptized, there are fewer allusions of this kind perhaps in the primitive Fathers than might have been expected; and such as there are generally bear evidence of being addressed to persons who were familiar with the subject, and for whom a word was enough. Still there are traces of such a ritual amply sufficient for our purpose. I will mention a few—the rather, because we shall here have a popular example of the value of these authors: The fullest account we have in any very ancient writer of the public service of the Christians, is in the *Apolog. i.* of Justin Martyr, § 65, 66, 67; it is too long to insert here: amongst its features are, reading the Gospels or the Prophets—(Tertullian says, the Law, the Prophets, the Gospels, and the Epistles—*De Præscript. Hæret.* § 36. p. 215,)—a Sermon to enforce the Scriptures thus read—a Litany in which all join, *ἔπειτα ἀνιστάμεθα κοινῇ πάντες, καὶ εὐχὰς πέμπομεν*—the sacrament of the Eucharist, where the priest alone offers up the prayer, the people responding with an Amen—the distribution of the elements—and the giving of alms. This Liturgy was certainly a settled *Form of Prayer*. Clemens Alexandrinus speaks of the congregation "having one *common voice* and one mind," *τὸ ἄθροισμα τῶν ταῖς εὐχαῖς ἀνακειμένων, μίαν ὥσπερ ἔχον φωνήν*
τήν

many features in common (even where the churches which used them were remote from

τὴν κοινὴν, καὶ μίαν γνώμην. Strom. vii. § 6, 848. Cyprian condemns the use of any *unauthorised form* in public worship, “inobsequens servus, filius impius, frater inimicus, contemptis episcopis, et Dei sacerdotibus derelectis, constituere audet aliud altare, precem alteram *illicitis vocibus* facere.” De Unitat. Eccles. p. 200. He forbids any *extempore* prayer in the congregation; “et quando in unum cum fratribus convenimus, et sacrificia divina cum Dei sacerdote celebramus, verecundiæ et disciplinæ memores esse debemus, non passim ventilare preces nostras *inconditis vocibus*.” De Orat. Dominic. p. 205. Hippolytus enumerates amongst the catastrophes that will accompany the consummation of all things, this, λειτουργία σβεσθήσεται, ψαλμωδία παυθήσεται, ἀνάγνωσις τῶν γραφῶν οὐκ εἰσακουσθήσεται. De Consumm. Mundi, § 34. Some of the subjects of the general Liturgy may be picked up—thanksgivings for our “*creation*,” “for the means of our *preservation*,”—“for the *qualities* of divers kind of things,”—“for the changes of the *seasons*,”—“for our restoration to *immortality* through faith.” Justin Apolog. i. § 13. Prayers for “*the Emperors*,”—“for *those in authority under them*,” (pro ministris eorum ac potestatibus,)—“for the good of the *commonwealth*,”—“for *quiet times*,”—“for *time to prepare for the end*.” Tertullian. Apolog. § 39—“for our *enemies*.” Justin Dialog. § 35—“for *such as do stand, that they may be strengthened, for those that fall, that they may be raised up*,” (pro lapsis ut erigantur; pro stantibus, ut non ad ruinas usque tententur). Cyprian. Ep. xxxi. p. 44.

The form of the *Eucharistic Service* was perfectly familiar to Christians. Irenæus refers to it in a manner to convince us of this, and at the same time furnishes us with a fragment of it, “We ourselves too, they maintain, *when we say at the Eucharist* εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων (in omnia sæcula sæculorum) signify these *Æons*.” L. i. c. 3. § 1. p. 14. Tertullian alludes to the same or a similar passage in it, and in the like familiar way, “illas manus quas ad Deum extuleris, postmodum laudando histrionem fatigare! ex ore quo ‘amen’ in sanctum protuleris, gladiatori testimonium reddere! εἰς αἰῶνας ἀπ’ αἰῶνος alii omnino dicere, nisi Deo et Christo!” De Spectac. § 25,

one another) as to bespeak a settled form to have prevailed from the foundation of the

p. 83. Cyprian tells us that the priest prepared the minds of the people for the service, by exclaiming, "*Lift up your hearts;*" to which they replied, "*We lift them up unto the Lord.*" Sacerdos ante orationem præfatione præmissâ parat fratrum mentes dicendo, *sursum corda...respondet plebs, habemus ad Dominum.* De Orat. Dominic. p. 213. Irenæus refers to a form of *giving thanks* over the elements: "*hanc oblationem Ecclesia sola puram offert Fabricatori, offerens ei cum gratiarum actione ex creaturâ ejus;*" and again: "*quomodo autem constabit eis, eum panem in quo gratiæ actæ sint, corpus esse Domini sui, et calicem sanguinis ejus,*" &c. L. iv. c. 18. § 4. p. 251. In the circular Epistle of the Church of Smyrna, preserved by Eusebius, and which contains an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, he is represented as saying, in his last prayer, "*For this, and for all things, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, through Jesus Christ.*" —διὰ τοῦτο καὶ περὶ πάντων σέ αἰνῶ, σέ εὐλογῶ, σέ δοξάζω. κ. τ. λ. Euseb. B. H. L. iv. c. 15. p. 169. A laud with which the Eucharistic service of the Church had probably rendered him familiar.

There was a stated *form of Baptism*, to which allusions are made in a similar manner, i. e., as to a thing perfectly well-known to Christians; and we have here again fragments of its substance. Thus reference is made by Tertullian, to a *consecration of the water*. "*Igitur omnes aquæ de pristinâ originis prærogativâ sacramentum consecrationis consequuntur, invocato Deo. Supervenit enim statim spiritus de cœlis, et aquis superest, sanctificans eas de semetipso; et ita sanctificatæ vim sanctificandi combibunt.*" De Baptismo, § 4. p. 225. Apart from this, and as used by heathens, the waters were *aquæ viduæ*, § 4. p. 226. Cyprian is still more explicit, "*Oportet ergo mundari et sanctificari aquam prius a sacerdote, ut possit Baptismo suo peccata hominis qui baptizatur, abluere.*" Ep. xxx. p. 125, ("*Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin.*") The *forehead* of the party was *signed* with the sign of the Cross at Baptism, "*Lepræ varietate in fronte maculatus est, eâ parte corporis notatus offenso Domino ubi signantur*

Church? But if this be not enough, call to mind what were actually the directions by

nantur qui Dominum promerentur," writes Cyprian. De Unitat. Eccles. p. 201. There were *promises and vows* exacted and responded to in Baptism according to a set form. Cyprian speaks of interrogations put at Baptism, "*sed et ipsa interrogatio quæ fit in Baptismo testis est veritatis. Nam cum dicimus, Credis in vitam æternam et remissionem peccatorum per sanctam ecclesiam,*" &c. Ep. lxx. p. 125; and Tertullian, "*vocati sumus ad militiam Dei vivi, jam tunc cum in sacramenti verba respondimus.*" Ad Martyr, § 3, p. 138, ("*manfully to fight under his banner, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier*"). The same author speaks of these promises and vows, in the case of infants, being undertaken by the *sponsors*,—"quid enim necesse est, *sponsors etiam periculo ingeri? quia et ipsi per mortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possunt.*" De Baptismo, § 18, p. 231. With respect to the nature of them, one was, that the party *renounced the devil, the pomps, and the world.* Tertullian tells us, "*ad spectacula pertinere renuntiationis nostræ testimonium in lavacro, quæ diabolo et pompæ et angelis ejus sint mancipata, scilicet per idolatriam.*" De Spectac. § 4, p. 74, "*pactus es renuntiare ipsi, et pompæ, et angelis ejus.*" De Animâ, § 35, p. 291. The very word *renuntio* and *pompa*, is not accidental, but is used again and again when the Fathers touch upon this topic. See Tertullian, De Idolatr. § 6. p. 88. De Cultu Fœminar. § 2. p. 150. De Spectac. § 13. p. 79. De Coronâ. § 3. p. 102. Cyprian adds that the "*world*" was also renounced at Baptism, "*sæculo renuntiaveramus cum baptizati sumus.*" Ep. vi. p. 12. ("*dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of this world?*") But besides promises and vows to renounce the devil, his pomps, and the world, the party to be baptized had to make a profession of his *belief* in the Christian faith, ("*all this I stedfastly believe*"). Irenæus speaks of this "*fixed canon of faith* received at baptism," τὸν κανόνα τῆς ἀληθείας ἀκλινῇ . . . ὃν διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἴληφε. I. c. 9, § 4. And Tertullian, "*cum aquam ingressi Christianam fidem in legis suæ verba profite-mur.*" De Spectac. § 4. p. 74. And Clemens Alexandrinus talks of a rule of faith or *creed*, as a form, with which the

which Archbishop Cranmer and his colleagues were to be guided when they prepared the

Church was perfectly familiar, calling it τὴν ὁμολογίαν τὴν πρὸς ἡμᾶς, and τὸν Ἐκκλησιαστικὸν κανονα. Strom. vii. § 15, p. 887. The substance of this *canon* or *creed* thus professed, Irenæus gives; and it will be found to differ but little from the Apostles' Creed. "The Church, though dispersed over the whole world, received from the Apostles and from their disciples a *belief* in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and the seas, and all things in them; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Ghost, who spake by the prophets of the dispensation, (or perhaps incarnation,) the advents, the birth of a virgin, the passion, the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven, of the beloved Jesus Christ our Lord, and his coming again from heaven in the glory of the Father, to restore all things, and to raise up all flesh of all mankind," &c. ἡ μὲν γὰρ Ἐκκλησία, καίπερ καθ' ὅλης τῆς οἰκουμένης ἕως περάτων τῆς γῆς διεσπαρμένη, παρὰ δὲ τῶν Ἀποστόλων, καὶ τῶν ἐκείνων μαθητῶν παραλαβούσα τὴν εἰς ἓνα Θεόν, Πατέρα παντοκράτορα τὸν πεποιηκότα τὸν οὐρανὸν, καὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ τὰς θαλάσσας, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς, πίστιν· καὶ εἰς ἓνα Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸν σαρκωθέντα ὑπὲρ τῆς ἡμετέρας σωτηρίας· καὶ εἰς Πνεῦμα ἅγιον, τὸ διὰ τῶν προφητῶν κεκηρυχὸς τὰς οἰκονομίας, καὶ τὰς ἐλεύσεις, καὶ τὴν ἐκ Παρθένου γέννησιν, καὶ τὸ πάθος, καὶ τὴν ἔγερσιν ἐκ νεκρῶν, καὶ τὴν ἑνσαρκον εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς ἀνάληψιν τοῦ ἡγαπημένου Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν, καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ Πατρὸς παρουσίαν αὐτοῦ, κ.τ.λ. i. c. 10, § 1. The substance of this *Regula Fidei*, for so he calls it, as given by Tertullian in two different places, and not in the selfsame words in both, will be found much the same as that of Irenæus. The two places are, De Præscript. Hæreticor. § 13. p. 206; and Adv. Praxeam. § 2. p. 501. The former runs thus: "Unum omnino Deum esse, nec alium præter mundi conditorem; qui universa de nihilo produxerit, per verbum suum primò omnium demissum: Id verbum Filium ejus appellatum, in nomine Dei variè visum a Patriarchis, in Prophetis semper auditum, postremo delatum ex Spiritu Patris Dei et virtute in Virginem Mariam, carnem factum in utero ejus, et ex eâ
2 natum

First Book of Common Prayer in the second year of King Edward the Sixth; and when

natum egisse Jesum Christum: exinde prædicasse novam legem, et novam promissionem regni cælorum; virtutes fecisse; fixum Cruci; tertiâ die resurrexisse; in cælos ereptum sedisse ad dextram Patris; misisse vicariam vim Spiritus Sancti, qui credentes agat; venturum cum claritate, ad sumendos sanctos in vitæ æternæ et promissorum cœlestium fructum, et ad profanos adjudicandos igni perpetuo, factâ utriusque partis resurrectione cum carnis restitutione."

A *Form of Confirmation* is also hinted at. Tertullian thus speaks of it:—"Dehinc manus imponitur, per *benedictionem* advocans et invitans *Spiritum Sanctum*." De Baptismo, § 8. p. 227.—("Defend, O Lord, this thy child, with thy heavenly grace, that he may continue thine for ever, and daily increase in thy *Holy Spirit* more and more.")

There is another hint respecting a *Marriage Service*; of the *Sacrament* of the Lord's Supper, following this rite; and of a *benediction* forming a part of it; "Unde sufficiamus ad enarrandam felicitatem ejus matrimonii quod *Ecclesia conciliat*, et *confirmat oblatio*, et *obsignat benedictio*, et angeli renuntiant, Pater rato habet." Tertull. ad Vxor. II. c. 8, p. 171.

And the "*Pax*" of the Church, which the sick man was so anxious to obtain before death, and to which repeated allusions are made in Cyprian (Ep. XII. p. 22, Ep. XIV. p. 24) is traced, in the salutation, "*Peace* be unto this house," retained in our service for the *Visitation of the Sick*.

To all this may be added many customs practised in the Primitive Church, to be collected from these same authors, marking an organized ritual; such as turning to the East in prayer,—having fixed times of prayer,—Wednesdays and Fridays appointed as fast-days, and other matters of a like kind, which the length of this note forbids me from entering upon.

If we were to descend to the Apostolical constitutions, the extracts by which our services would be shown to coincide in many particulars with those of early times, would quite exceed the bounds I must prescribe myself. The date of those documents is doubtful; unquestionably much of them bears internal evidence of being of the very first antiquity. They

Popery, be it remembered, was the great abuse against which they had to contend ; and against

may be considered as a receptacle in which the ordinances, rituals, &c., of the Primitive Church have, from time to time, been deposited. For the sake of those who are not acquainted with this work, and who are not fully alive to the venerable character of our Prayer-Book, I will set down a very few, out of many similar parallels.

"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known," &c. &c.

"And humbly we beseech thee, to grant that he, being dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death, may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin ; and that as he is made partaker of the death of thy Son, he may also be partaker of his resurrection.

"Glory be to God on high ; and in earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly king, God the Father Almighty.

"O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesu Christ : O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have

ὁ ὢν μόνος παντοκράτωρ καὶ κύριος . . . ᾧ πᾶσα γυμνοφανὴς βλέπεται κάρδια, καὶ πᾶν κρύφιον ἐνθύμημα ἀποκαλύπτεται. VII. c. 33.

δὸς δὲ χάριν καὶ δύναμιν, ὥστε τὸν βαπτιζόμενον κατ' ἐντολὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ σου, αὐτῷ συσταυρωθῆναι καὶ συναποθανεῖν, καὶ συνταφῆναι, καὶ συναναστῆναι εἰς υἰοθεσίαν τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ, τῷ νεκρωθῆναι μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ζῆσαι δὲ τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ. VII. c. 43.

Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη, ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία. αἰνοῦμέν σε, ὑμνοῦμέν σε, διὰ τοῦ μεγάλου ἀρχιερέως· σὲ τὸν ὄντα Θεόν, ἀγέννητον ἕνα, ἀπρόσιτον μόνον· διὰ τὴν μεγάλην σου δόξαν· κύριε βασιλεῦ ἐπουράνιε, Θεὲ Πάτερ παντοκράτορ· κύριε ὁ Θεὸς, ὁ Πατὴρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ ἀμώμου ἀμνοῦ, ὃς αἶρει τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου, πρόσδεξαι τὴν δέησιν ἡμῶν. ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῶν Χερουβίμ· ὅτι σὺ μόνος Κύριος

which they had to make their own cause good. They were these; that they should “draw an order of divine worship, having respect to the pure religion of Christ taught in the scripture, and *to the practice of the Primitive Church*.” And accordingly when they had completed their work, they recommended it to the people in a preface which is still retained, saying, “here you have an order for Prayer, as touching the reading of Holy Scripture, *much agreeable to the mind and purpose of the old Fathers.*” In

mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, *receive our prayer, Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy on us.*

“*For thou only, art holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father.*

“*Lord, have mercy upon us,*” frequently repeated.

Ἰησοῦς, Χριστὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ πάσης γεννητῆς φύσεως, τοῦ βασιλέως ἡμῶν δι' οὗ σοι δόξα, τιμὴ, καὶ σέβας. VII. c. 47.

ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ δὲ τούτων ὧν ὁ διάκονος προσφωνεῖ, ὡς προείπομεν, λεγέτω ὁ λαὸς, Κύριε ἐλέησον. VIII. c. 6.

I will content myself with referring my readers to other places in these constitutions, which they may consult for themselves.—VIII. c. 10, where they will find many passages of the Bidding Prayer (55th can.), and of the Litany.—VIII. c. 12, where are many more passages of the Litany.—and VIII. c. 18, compare with the Ordination Service.

¹ Cardwell's Pref. to the Two Books of Common Prayer of King Edward VI. p. x.

another preface, that to the service for the Ordering of Deacons, we are told, “it is evident to all men diligently reading the Holy Scripture *and ancient authors*, that from the Apostles’ time there have been these orders of Ministers in Christ’s Church.” In the twenty-fourth Article the language used is this,—“It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the *custom of the Primitive Church*, to have public prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood of the people.” Again, in her Communion Service, “Brethren,” says she, “*in the Primitive Church* there was a godly discipline, that at the beginning of Lent such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin, were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord.”

Further: in her Homilies (these again still written very mainly to counteract popery, and to confirm the reformed faith,) reference is perpetually made to the Primitive Church. In the Homily on Salvation,—“After this wise to be justified only by this true and lively faith in Christ, speak all *the old and ancient authors, both Greeks and Latins*.” In the Homily against peril of Idolatry,—“Contrary to the which most manifest doctrine of the Scriptures, and *contrary to the usage of the Primitive Church*, which was

the most pure and uncorrupt, and contrary to the sentences and judgments of the most ancient, learned, and godly doctors of the Church, (as hereafter shall appear,) the corruption of these latter days hath brought into the Church infinite multitudes of images." Again, in the same,—“Ye have heard, well-beloved, in the first part of this Homily, the doctrine of the *word of God* against idols and images, against idolatry and worshipping of images, taken out of the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the New, and confirmed by the examples as well of the Apostles, as of our Saviour Christ himself. Now although our Saviour Christ taketh not or needeth not any testimony of men, and that which is once confirmed by the certainty of this eternal truth hath no more need of the confirmation of man's doctrine and writings, than the bright sun at noon-tide hath need of the light of a little candle to put away darkness, and to increase his light: yet for your further contentation, it shall in this second part be declared (as in the beginning of the first part was promised,) that this truth and doctrine concerning the forbidding of images and worshipping of them, taken out of the Holy Scriptures, as well of the Old Testament as the New, was believed and taught of the *old holy Fathers*, and most ancient learned doc-

tors, and received in the old *Primitive Church*, which was most uncorrupt and pure." In the Homily on Fasting,—“Fasting, then, even by Christ’s assent, is a withholding of meat, drink, and all natural food from the body, for the determined time of fasting. And that it was used in the *Primitive Church*, appeareth most evidently by the Chalcedon Council, one of the four first general Councils.” In the Homily concerning the Sacrament,—“In respect of which straight knot of charity, the true Christians in the *Primitive Church* called this supper, Love: as if they would say, none ought to sit down there that were not of love and charity. This was their practice.” In the same,—“Before all things, this we must be sure of especially, that this supper be in such wise done and ministered, as our Lord and Saviour did and commanded to be done; as his Holy Apostles used it; and the good Fathers in the *Primitive Church* frequented it.” In the Homily for Whitsunday,—“The true Church hath three notes or marks, whereby it is known; pure and sound doctrine; the Sacraments ministered according to Christ’s holy institution; and the right use of ecclesiastical discipline. The description of the Church is agreeable both to the Scriptures of God, and also to *the doctrine of the ancient Fathers*, so that none may justly

find fault therewith. Now if you will compare this with the Church of Rome, not as it was in the beginning, but as it is presently, or hath been for the space of nine hundred years and odd, you shall well perceive the state thereof to be so far wide from the nature of the true Church, that nothing can be more." So clearly does the Church of England, when she had to purge herself of popery and to make good her own revision, recommend us to search both the Scriptures and the Fathers of the Primitive Church, by the language she adopts in her Homilies.

Scarcely of less authority than these, as representing the sentiments of our reformers, was the Apology of Bishop Jewel; and here again, from first to last, the Defence of the Church of England, a defence still be it remembered, against the Romish party, proceeds on a reference to Scripture and the *Primitive Church*.

"Docemus sacrosanctum Dei Evangelium, et veteres Episcopos, atque *Ecclesiam Primitivam*, nobiscum facere; nosque non sine justâ causâ, et ab istis, (sc. a Romanâ Ecclesiâ) discessisse, et ad Apostolos veteresque Catholicos Patres rediisse; idque non obscure, aut vafre, sed bonâ fide, coram Deo, verè, ingenuè, dilucidè, et perspicuè facimus." "We undertake to show that the most glorious Gospel

of God, and the ancient bishops, and the *Primitive Church*, are on our side ; and that we have not withdrawn from the Church of Rome, and returned to the Apostles and old Catholic Fathers, without a just cause ; and this we shall do, not obscurely, or disingenuously, but in good faith, as in the presence of God, truly, clearly, perspicuously.”

Again:—“Ita nos quoque, quoniam istis furere videmur, et ab illis traducimur pro hæreticis, quasi quibus nihil jam rei sit nec cum Christo, nec cum Ecclesiâ Dei, non alienum aut inutile fore existimavimus, si apertè et liberè proponamus fidem nostram in quâ stamus, et omnem illam spem, quam habemus in Christo Jesu, ut omnes videre possint, quid nos de quâque parte religionis Christianæ sentiamus, et statuere secum ipsi possint, an ea fides, quam videbunt et verbis Christi, et Apostolorum scriptis, et *Catholicorum Patrum testimoniis*, et multorum sæculorum exemplis confirmatam, tantum sit rabies quædam hominum furentium, et conspiratio hæreticorum.” “Wherefore, seeing that they think us mad, and traduce us as heretics, who have no longer anything to do with Christ, or the Church of God, we have considered it not a useless undertaking, frankly and fully to declare the faith in which we stand fast, and all that hope which we have in Christ Jesus ;

in order that all may be made aware what our sentiments are upon every point of the Christian religion, and so may be able to determine for themselves, whether a faith which they find confirmed by the words of Christ, the writings of the Apostles, *the testimonies of the Catholic Fathers*, and the examples of many generations, can be a mere delirium of raving men, or a conspiracy of heretics." Again:—"Cumque nihil relinquent indictum, quod in nos, quamvis falso et calumniosè dici possit, hoc tamen unum non possunt dicere; nos vel a verbo Dei, vel ab Apostolis Christi, vel a *Primitivâ Ecclesiâ* descivisse. Atqui nos Christi, et Apostolorum, et Sanctorum Patrum *Primitivam Ecclesiam, semper judicavimus esse Catholicam*; nec eam dubitamus, Arcam Noe, Sponsam Christi, columnam et firmamentum veritatis appellare, aut in eâ omnem salutis nostræ rationem collocare."—

"And, whereas they leave nothing unsaid which can be urged against us, however false and calumnious, this, at any rate, they cannot assert, that we have withdrawn either from the Word of God, or from the Apostles of Christ, or from the *Primitive Church*. For we have ever considered the *Primitive Church* of Christ and the Apostles, and the Holy Fathers, to be the *Catholic Church*; nor do we scruple to call that the Ark of Noah, the Spouse of Christ,

the pillar and ground of the truth ; or to place in it the whole scheme of our salvation.” And again,—“Istorum vero religio, si ita antiqua et vetus est, uti ipsi videri volunt, cur eam ab exemplis *Primitivæ Ecclesiæ*, ex *Antiquis Patribus*, et *Conciliis veteribus* non probant? Cur tam vetus causa tamdiu deserta jacet sine patrono? Ferrum quidem et flamman semper habuerunt ad manum ; de *Conciliis vero antiquis et Patribus*, magnum silentium.”—“But if their religion is so ancient as they would have us suppose, why do they not prove it from the examples of the *Primitive Church*, from the *early Fathers*, from the *old Councils*? How is it that a cause of such antiquity should be so long neglected, and without a patron? Sword and faggot they have always had at hand, but touching ancient Councils and Fathers they keep still silence.” Again :—“Postremo ab Ecclesiâ eâ discessimus quæ nunc est, non quæ olim fuit ; atque ita discessimus, ut Daniel e caveâ leonum ; ut tres illi pueri ex incendio ; nec tam discessimus, quam ab istis, diris et devotionibus, ejecti sumus. Accessimus vero ad illam Ecclesiam in quâ ne ipsi quidem, si verè atque ex animo loqui volunt, negare possunt, omnia castè ac reverenter, et quantum nos assequi potuimus, proximè *ad priscorum temporum rationem administrari*. Conferant enim

Ecclesias nostras suasque inter se.”—“ Finally, we have withdrawn from the Church as it now is, *not as it was of old*; and we have withdrawn from it, as Daniel withdrew from the lions’ den; or the Three Children from the fire; nor, indeed, can we be strictly said to have withdrawn, but we have rather been cast out with imprecations and curses. Then we have added ourselves to a Church, in which, they must themselves confess, if they will candidly speak the truth, that all things are conducted chastely, reverently, and as far as is attainable, *closely after the model of primitive times*,—for let them but compare our Church with theirs.” Again:—“ Etsi enim discessimus ab illâ Ecclesiâ, quam isti appellant Catholicam, et eâ re, nobis apud illos qui judicare non possunt, invidiam faciunt, tamen id satis est nobis, satisque esse debet homini prudenti et pio, et de æternâ vitâ cogitanti, nos ab eâ Ecclesiâ discessisse, quæ errare potuerit; quam Christus qui errare non potest, tanto ante prædixerit erraturam; quamque nos ipsi oculis perspicuè videbamus a sanctis Patribus, ab Apostolis, a Christo ipso, *a Primitivâ et Catholicâ Ecclesiâ* discessisse. Accessimus autem, quantum maximè potuimus, ad Ecclesiam Apostolorum, et *veterum Catholicorum Episcoporum et Patrum*, quam scinus adhuc fuisse integram, utque

Tertullianus ait, incorruptam virginem.”—
 “For, although we have withdrawn from that Church which they call Catholic, and thus fasten upon us the odium of those who are incompetent to judge, still it is enough for us, and ought to be enough for any prudent and pious person who has eternal life before him, that we have withdrawn from a Church which could err; of which, Christ, who could not err, foretold that it would err; and which, we ourselves with our own eyes saw clearly, had departed from the holy Fathers, from the Apostles, from Christ himself, from *the Primitive and Catholic Church*: and we have approached, as near as we could, to the Church of the Apostles and *old Catholic Bishops and Fathers*; a Church which we know was then uncorrupt, and, as Tertullian saith, a virgin undefiled.”—And, in another passage, Jewel observes, that when Ezra was about to restore the temple, he did not send to Ephesus for a model, although there was a very beautiful temple there; neither, when he was about to renew the rites of that temple, did he send to Rome, although rites enough were there to be had; but contented himself with regarding and copying the old temple which Solomon built as God taught him, and the old rites which God prescribed to Moses.

Such was the language of the champions of the Church of England whilst they had to defend her against the *Romanists*; and to vindicate against *them* the position they had taken up for her. And we may rest assured, that if our Church is in fact constructed upon one principle, and we undertake to advocate her cause as if she was constructed upon another, we shall soon find ourselves involved in more difficulties than we contemplated.

II. The *Puritans* and *Socinians* succeeded the Romanists in the attack upon her; and still the churchmen who were accounted her best and safest guardians now, appealed as their predecessors had done, to Scripture and the Primitive Church, for their arguments. Witness the writings of Hooker, of Taylor, of Hammond, of Sanderson, of Pearson, of Bull, and many more; a class of divines, to whom the works of the most ancient Fathers of all were even more familiar, perhaps, than they were to the Reformers themselves. Let us take an example or two from the first I have named of this noble company; the first too of our great churchmen who wrote after the controversy had shifted its ground from the *Romish* to the *Puritan* question; and we shall see, as I have said, that the principle upon which the defence of the Church of England was main-

tained, was the same as before, though the assault was from quite a different quarter—namely, that she was, on the whole, the Primitive Church restored.

“They which hereof make so perilous a matter, do seem to imagine, that we have erected of late a frame of some *new* religion, the furniture whereof we should not have borrowed from our enemies, lest they relieving us, should afterwards laugh and gibe at our poverty; whereas in truth, the ceremonies which we have taken from such as were before us, are not things that belong to this or that sect, but *they are the ancient rites and customs of the Church of Christ*; whereof ourselves being a part, we have the selfsame interest in them which our fathers before us had, from whom the same are descended unto us¹.” Again:—“Was it amiss, that having this way eased the Church, as they thought, of superfluity, they went not on, till they had plucked up even those things also which had taken a great deal stronger and deeper root; those things which to abrogate without constraint of manifest harm thereby arising, had been to alter unnecessarily (in their judgments) *the ancient received custom of the whole Church, the universal practice of the people of God, and those very decrees of our fathers, which were not only set down by agreement of*

¹ Eccles. Pol. B. iv. ch. 9. § 1.

general Councils, but had accordingly been put in use till that very time present¹?” And again,—for I have all along multiplied my quotations at the risk of being thought tedious, (though why should I excuse myself for thus incidentally bringing the works of such master-minds largely before you?) in order to shew that the view to be taken of our Church for which I am contending, is not one which escapes from our great early divines once or twice, and as if by chance, but is presented to us all their writings through, as their abiding permanent impression—“As far as they (*i. e.* the Romanists) follow reason and truth, we fear not to tread the selfsame steps wherein they have gone, and to be their followers. *Where Rome keepeth that which is ancients and better*, others whom we much more affect, leaving it for newer and changing it for worse; we had rather follow the perfections of them whom we like not, than in defects resemble them whom we love².” And again:—“In the rest we observe that custom whereunto St Paul alludeth, and whereof *the Fathers of the Church*, in their writings, make often mention, to show indefinitely what was done, but not universally to bind for ever all prayers unto one only fashion of utterance.³”

¹ Eccles. Pol. B. iv. ch. 14. § 4. ² Ibid. B. v. ch. 28. § 1.

³ Ib. ch. 36. § 3.

Let these instances out of multitudes suffice—for were we to proceed in this *Catena Patrum*, to the names of a later date than Hooker, to which allusion has been made, we should only find the principle I am developing still more apparent—the times of trouble to the Church, which had succeeded, having only served to render the appeal to that principle on the part of the champions of the Church, still more cogent and necessary. Indeed the authority of some of the earliest Christian records was by this time becoming better understood than in the days of the Reformation itself. The Epistles of Ignatius, for instance, documents of the highest value both for the testimony they bear to the divinity of the Saviour, and to the episcopal form of Church government, were scarcely to be appealed to with confidence, till Usher and Isaac Vossius, first by the discovery of manuscripts; and Pearson afterwards, by most ingenious criticism, established (as is generally admitted) the genuineness of the shorter copies—not to say that our reformers from early habit as Romanists, and from a disposition to meet their antagonists on their own ground, appear to have been well disposed to refer to Fathers of a later date than the three first centuries. But the rise and progress of the Puritan and

Socinian causes, put the divines of the seventeenth century on looking at the Fathers in a fresh light, and from a new quarter—so that on the whole, opposite as the point was from which the assault came, still the Church of England found the faith and practice of the Primitive Church to be a shield and buckler.

And indeed it stands to reason that it should be so. Thus to take the case of the Romanist. He finds in those texts of Scripture which relate to the Eucharist, and to the authority of which texts we, of course, bow no less than himself, his great doctrine of transubstantiation. We of the Church of England understand the expressions to which he refers, in a more figurative sense. Where can we turn for further light so well, as to the Primitive Church? The true interpretation of so important a tenet, must, we may suppose, have been received by those who were the immediate successors of the Apostles; and on finding their testimony in our favour, as I will make bold to affirm we do, we may be well content. Or again—if we take the case of the Puritan: he discovers in those texts of Scripture which relate to Church government, and by which texts we profess to be bound no less than he does, that the three orders of the ministry are not recognized. How can

we test our respective opinions better than by recourse to the Primitive Church, in which if we find the three orders clearly prevailing, we may be satisfied that our exposition of these Scriptures is the sounder of the two? Take another case, that of the Socinian; involving a question of the most vital importance of all, the divinity and atonement of the Son. Certainly it seems to us that nothing can be more clear and explicit upon these points than the Scripture itself; and we may quote with great satisfaction the verdict of one of the most perfect masters of Greek which this University ever produced, Professor Porson; that “if the New Testament is to determine the question, and words have any meaning, the Socinians are wrong¹”—still they think otherwise themselves. How then, once more I ask, can the point be determined with so much probability of justice being done it, as by consulting the Primitive Church—by ascertaining what the creed was in this article, of those Christians who lived in the generations next after the Apostles, and who could scarcely have been left in ignorance of a matter so momentous? Indeed, the Socinian himself is aware of the value of such testimony; and accordingly

¹ Quarterly Rev. No. LXV. p. 99. Art. III. on the controversy upon 1 John v. 7.

Dr Priestley bravely challenged the Primitive Fathers for his own; an act of presumption which must seem so extravagant to every man who has examined them for himself, that it can only be accounted for on the supposition of his own slender acquirements on such subjects (which indeed Bishop Horsley sufficiently exposes,) and the confidence he must have had that he was writing at a time when the early ecclesiastical authors were but imperfectly known even to churchmen themselves, and that he was at any rate *monoculus inter cæcos*.

Whether therefore we have to defend our Church against the Romanist, the Puritan, or the Rationalist; and the day is come when we have not to defend her against one or other, but against them all; and therefore when it behoves us to adopt a principle of defence which will avail us against them all, and to say, with the warrior of old, when tempted to look to one point of the ramparts too exclusively,

ἡ καὶ ἐμοὶ ΤΑΔΕ ΠΑΝΤΑ μέλει^τ:

we shall find a magazine of arms fitted for our purpose in the writings of the Primitive Fathers; so that a man well versed in these, it being presumed of course that he is familiar with the Scriptures—can seldom be taken

at a disadvantage by either of these various assailants; whilst it seems scarcely possible for one ignorant of them, to conduct his argument with such discretion, as not to lay himself open to thrusts which come from quarters so different.

But whilst our own Church, as well as the reason of the thing itself, encourages us to give great heed to these Fathers, it is not to be denied that they are to be read with caution. Sometimes it is to be borne in mind, that they are contending against heretical opinions which have long passed away, but which at the time forced them by their extravagance into positions unfriendly to the calm investigation of truth. Sometimes that the civil relations of the Christian community were in those days so far from the same as in these, that much qualification may be fitting under this head. Sometimes that the Fathers themselves may have been led into a snare, by an over-anxious desire to make their doctrines palatable to the philosophy of that age. Sometimes that the difficulty of finding any common ground of argument with their antagonists led them to adopt questionable principles; or to push such as were safe, to an extreme that was dangerous. Sometimes that they are themselves tainted with heresy. Some-

times that they are inconsistent with themselves, or with one another. Sometimes that they speak the voice of the individual, rather than of the universal Church. Sometimes that practices to which they allude, though innocent, have been found liable to abuse, and have been discontinued in consequence. Sometimes that they wrote before controversy had reduced the language of theology to exactness, and may on that account seem rash and unguarded¹. These, and the like allowances, must undoubtedly be made by us, when reading the writings of the Fathers; and may be made, consistently with a very high sense of the value of their testimony in general, and a very wholesome application of it on the whole. So is it with regard to witnesses in our courts—there may be found something perhaps to reserve in the evidence of each of them—some abatement to be made, for inconsistency; inadvertency; precipitation; passion; prejudice; character; opportunity; and the like; all which, nevertheless, does not prevent twelve honest men who are only bent on looking for the truth, by sifting the evidence of each, and combining that of all, from drawing a conclusion, for all practical purposes suffi-

¹ Examples of these several caveats will readily suggest themselves to readers of the early Fathers.

ciently correct and trustworthy. Our Church herself, much as she defers to the authority of the Fathers, encourages such exceptions to be sometimes taken; for though following them in most things, especially as helpers to the interpretation of Scripture; and conservators of Creeds and Rituals; she does not blindly bind herself to them in all things; particularly on some points where the Scriptures are, not doubtful, but altogether silent; much less, where they are, or seem to be, opposed—Still we must be careful not to let our estimate of the worth or worthlessness of the Fathers be formed at second hand, from a mere perusal of such authors as Daillé or Barbeyrac, whose only object is to single out whatever imperfections they present, and place them before their readers in continuous succession, and without one lucid interval of merit—nor yet from observing the value set on them by Puritan writers of our own, who, with Milton at their head, had their reasons for describing them as “an undigested heap and fry of authors, which they call antiquity,” insomuch that “whatever time, or the heedless hand of blind chance, hath drawn down from of old to this present time, in her huge drag-net, whether fish or sea-weed, shells or shrubs,

unpicked, unchosen, those are the Fathers¹." There is much distortion of the truth in such representations as these—yet churchmen have for a long time been content to know too little about the Fathers, except through some such medium; and the Church has suffered accordingly. For had not the period arrived when the broad principle upon which our reformers went in their restoration of her, and to which I have been endeavouring to give prominence in this Lecture, was so far lost sight of, even by churchmen, that it began to require some boldness, to re-assert it?—to make an avowal, which, from Edward the Sixth's time for generations afterwards, few churchmen at least, I believe, would have cared to conceal, or thought to dispute²? Was not the time come

¹ Of Prelatical Episcopacy.

² As a proof of the change which has gradually come over the spirit of the Church since the times of which I here speak, I will take Bishop Hall—a venerable name—as a fair representative, not of the high, but of the moderate party in the Church, some hundred years after the Reformation; indeed, so far was he from being a high-churchman, that when he entered upon the bishopric of Exeter, he was actually "had in great jealousy for too much favour of Puritanism." Moreover, I will take the fairest of all ways of setting forth his real sentiments; for I will gather them as they escape from him here and there incidentally in his *Contemplations*; having happened to note the passages down, without any view of making this use of them, when perusing that delightful work. Bishop Hall then was the man to use such language as the following:—

when it began to be almost as much a scandal to search the Fathers, those witnesses of this Primitive Church, of which our Reformers,

On the true view of the Reformation.

“What have our pious governors done then in religion? Had we gone about to lay a new foundation, the work had been accursed; now we have only scraped off some superfluous moss, that was grown upon these holy stones; we have cemented some broken pieces; we have pointed some crazy corners with wholesome mortar, instead of base clay, with which it was disgracefully patched up.—The altar is old; it is God’s altar; it is not new, not our’s;—if we have laid one new stone in this sacred building, let it fly in our faces, and beat out our eyes.”—Contempl. B. xx. 12. *Manasseh.*

On Ordinances.

“In spiritual things God hath acquainted us with the means whereby he will work, even his own sacred ordinances; upon these, because they have his own promise, we may call absolutely for a blessing; in all others there is no reason that beggars should be choosers.”—B. III. c. 2. N. 1. *The Ruler’s Son cursed.*

On Schism.

“Whatever tumults are abroad, it is fit there should be all quietness and sweet concord in the Church. O God! that the axes of schism, or the hammers of furious contentions, should be heard within thy sanctuary!”—B. xvii. 5. *On the Temple.*

On Unordained Persons assuming the Ministry.

“Why should Jeroboam send so far to an Ahijah? Certainly his heart despised those base priests of his high places, neither could he trust to the gods, or the clergy of his own making: his conscience rests upon the fidelity of that man whose doctrine he had forsaken.”—B. xviii. 4. *Jeroboam’s Wife.*

On Baptism.

“They are gross flatterers of nature that tell her she is clean. If our lives had no sin, we bring enough with us: the very infant that lives not to sin as Adam, yet he sinned in Adam, and is sinful in himself. But O, the unspeakable
mercy

we have seen, talk so much ; as it once was to be ignorant of it, and of them? And though this jealousy arose, no doubt, out of an honest

mercy of our God! we provide the sin; he provides the remedy." Under the Law this was circumcision and sacrifice. "Under the Gospel our Baptism hath the force of both; it does away our corruption by the water of the Spirit; it applies to us the sacrifice of Christ's blood, whereby we are cleansed."—B. I. c. 5. N. T. *The Purification.*

Again:—"His Baptism gives virtue to our's. His last action, or rather passion, was his baptizing with blood: his first was his baptism with water: both of them wash the world from their sins.—Yea, this latter did not only wash the souls of men, but washeth that very water by which we are washed: from hence is that made both clean and holy, and can both cleanse and hallow us. And if the very handkerchief, which touched his Apostles had power of cure, how much more that water which the sacred body of Christ touched!"—B. II. c. 2. N. T. *Christ's Baptism.*

Again:—"Even those that have not lived to sin after the similitude of Adam, yet are they so tainted with Adam, that unless the second Adam cleanse them by his Baptism, they are hopeless. There is no less use of Baptism unto all, than there is certainty of the need of Baptism."—Ib.

On the call to the Ministry.

"Let those consider this, which will needs run as soon as they can go; and when they find ability, think they need not stay for a further vocation of God on them."—B. II. c. 1. N. T. *Christ among the Doctors.*

On the Episcopalian form of Church Government.

"There can be no being without some kind of order; there can be no order in parity. If we look up unto heaven, there is the King of Gods, the Lord of Lords, higher than the highest. If to the earth, there are monarchs, kings, princes, peers, people. If we look down to hell, there is the prince of devils. They labour for confusion that call for parity. What should the Church do with such a form, as is not exemplified in

zeal for the glory of God's word, yet does the Church of England, which surely shares in such zeal to the uttermost, nay, of which it is the very characteristic mark, share in any such alarm, when she asks of every man who presents himself for priest's orders, whether "he will be diligent in prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, *and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same?*" expressions which, I think, few will say have no reference to the Fathers.—And has it been found on *experience*, (to put the matter to that test,) that whilst the Fathers were read, as in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, our theology was unsound and unscriptural; and that when they comparatively ceased to be read, as in the eighteenth century, it became pure heaven, in earth, in hell."—B. III. c. 3. N. T. *The dumb devil ejected.*

On the Apostolical Succession.

"They knew themselves Jews, but could not derive their line; these were yet admitted without difficulty: but those of the *priestly* tribe, which could not deduce their genealogy from the register, are cashiered as unclean: then God would be served in a blood; now in a due succession. If we could not fetch the line of our pedigree from Christ and his Apostles, we were not fit for the Evangelical altars. Their calling was by nature; our's by grace: the grace of inward abilities, of outward ordination; if we cannot approve both these, we are justly abandoned."—B. XXI. 1. *Zerubbabel and Ezra.*

I will make no remark on these passages; except to ask, whether the man who wrote them would be *now* thought to "have too much favour of Puritanism?"

and evangelical? On the contrary, was not our declension in orthodoxy (properly so termed) coincident with our declension in Churchman-ship; and did not mere ethics encroach upon our pulpits, as ecclesiastical antiquity was lost sight of?

If therefore there are any who look with jealousy on the Fathers as abettors of *high-church* principles as they are now called, (I have no delight in the phraseology, but it saves circumlocution;) which they partly may be; let them forgive them the wrong, when they contemplate them as abettors of *Gospel principles* too, which is undoubtedly true of them—and I feel confident, both from the effect they have had on my own mind, and from the very nature of things, that these two results would be found generally to follow from a study of the Fathers; namely, an increased reverence, certainly, for ecclesiastical institutions and ordinances, as having in them a great mystery; but an increased conviction also that the only sound and apostolical divinity is that, which “*ceases not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*”

I trust that in what I have said I have so expressed myself as not to lay myself open to the just animadversion of persons who have a competent knowledge of the subject before us.

Nobody can enter with any thoughtfulness into the multitude of most delicate and difficult questions which the Reformation stirred, without learning to be temperate in all things appertaining to it; and if he is called upon to take part in the intricate controversies which those questions give rise to, without striving to beware, that “he shoot not his arrow o’er the house, and hurt his brother.” The deeper he dives into the writings of the Primitive Church, with a view to elucidate the principles upon which that great crisis moved, the more, I think, will he be inclined to acquiesce in the discretion which *on the whole* guided our Reformers in their handling of antiquity; and the more will he perceive a call for the exercise of that virtue in himself, whilst he now calmly reviews and passes judgment on their wonderful work. And if there may be some particulars which he, as an individual, would be glad if they had adopted from the Primitive Church, or if, having adopted, they had held them fast, even at the risk of whatever abuse might have followed, and which the experience of past times had proved real, yet, considering how unspeakable a blessing it is for a people to have a form of faith and worship on which they repose, established for ages and hallowed by numberless associations;

bearing in mind the caution of the preacher, but too little remembered in these days, "who-so breaketh an hedge a serpent shall bite him, and whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith¹;" he will be slow to disturb that which is good by any attempt at a second reformation, even with a view to improve upon the first; content if he can raise the Church again something nearer to the platform on which Cranmer and Ridley left it; and from which, it must be confessed, it has insensibly settled down; who, treading in the steps of the old Fathers, were at one and the same time, zealous *Churchmen*,—witness the Ritual they have left us²—and *Evangelical Teachers*,—witness the Articles and Homilies, the portions of Scripture appointed by them for holy-days, and which days mark the sense in which they understood those passages; and in short, witness the whole of our Liturgical Services from the first line to the last. Rejoiced shall I be if any efforts of mine shall contribute to this consummation ever so little—nor do I despair of it—not from any presumptuous confidence in my own powers, but because I feel the vantage ground I here oc-

¹ Ecclesiastes x. 8, 9.

² See also "The Instruction of the Keys," in Cranmer's Catechism.

cupy; and that fountains, as our Universities are, from which the ministers of God are dispersed over the whole surface of the island, here, if any where, can the tree be cast in which shall flavour the waters.

If, then, I had to express in a word the general effect which I am anxious these Lectures on ecclesiastical antiquity should produce, it would be this; that they may induce my hearers to say Amen to that part of the declaration of the good Bishop Ken, contained in his last will—"As for my religion, I die in the communion of the Church of England, as it stands distinguished from all Papal and Puritan innovations, and as it *adheres to the doctrine of the Cross.*"

